

## Beijing Forum 2019 Pulse of the World: Archaeology and Civilization along the Silk Road (II)

On the afternoon of November 2nd, the panel session “Pulse of the World: Archaeology and Civilization along the Silk Road” was inaugurated in the Starlight Hall, Yingjie Exchange Centre, Peking University. Five speakers gave speeches on the topic of the “Technology Dissemination along the Silk Road (including Commerce and Trade)”.

Professor Qin Dashu from Peking University was the first scholar to present his research on “Srivijaya —The Centerport of the India Ocean Trade Circle — The Evidence from Literature Records and the Shipwreck materials of 9th -10th Century. Professor Qin pointed out that the truly large-scale export of China's ancient porcelain as commodities coincided with the rise of China's ancient maritime trade, which began in the 8th century. In the 9th century, the export of porcelain developed rapidly and reached its first peak in scope and volume in the 10th century. Based on the study of historical materials and archaeological evidences, Professor Qin stated that Chinese porcelain was exported to Korean Peninsula, Southeast Asia, Japan and other places, with a wide range of stylistic kilns. He then listed Tang’s recorded navigation routes and foreign contact locations, as well as detailed records of exported porcelain. Professor Qin later concluded that the maritime trade around the Indian Ocean in the 9th-10th century could be divided into three trade circles. Although the transmission of goods could reach a very long distance, such as evidences of 9th century Chinese porcelain found in East Africa, he believed that such kind of trade must have been carried out in an indirect way.

Professor Christiaan Jörg from Leiden University was the second scholar to present his speech “A Tang Silk Road to Northern Europe?”. He pointed out that compared to the trade routes from China to the West and the South, exchange passages to the North during the Tang period were less known. Archaeological findings of Tang period silks and ceramics in Baltic lands and in Sweden may support the existence of such northern trade route. He explained that his research into the connections in trade between China and Northern Europe was inspired by a cup he saw in the National Museum of the Republic of Latvia. He believed that the cup held similar characteristics with that of ceramic and metal Tang cup, which were found in a burial mound dated to the early 11th

century. Professor Jörg later provided more examples in support of such connection and discussed the possibilities of how these cups arrived to the North. At the end, Professor Jörg made an appeal for more academic interest to this subject, hoping that further studies could provide more evidence on the Tang Silk Road to Northern Europe.

Professor Li Jinxiu from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was the third scholar to present her speech “the Silk and Horses Trade between the Tang and the Kyrgyz”. The Silk and Horses Trade was an important means of economic exchange between the nomadic and residential societies, it was also one of the longest lasting forms of trade on the Silk Road. While there have been many achievements in the study of Silk and Horses trade, Professor Li believed that they mostly revolve around Tang’s exchange with the Turks and the Uighurs but not the Kyrgyz. By presenting examples of written evidences, she stated that the Kyrgyz joined the Silk Road in the early Tang Dynasty by exchanging mink fur for silk. However, due to the lack of direct contact with the Tang administration, it did not profit much from the trade. Later, with the continuous development of political and cultural exchanges, a direct silk and horses trade was established between the Tang and the Kyrgyz. Professor Li then explained in detail the three forms within the trade: tribute, market and private trade. Kyrgyz entered its second stage of trade with Tang when it replaced Uighur as the main role of silk and horses trade along the Silk Road. Professor Li concluded her speech by stating that the relationship between Tang and Kyrgyz was a happy one, it existed for mutual benefit and contributed greatly to the prosperity of the Silk Road.

Professor Hassan Fazeli Nashli from the University of Tehran was the fourth scholar to present his research on the “Interaction and intercommunication of Iran, central Asia and China from Fourth to the First Millennium BC”. In the last quarter of the Fourth Millennium BC, many early cities appeared in Central Plateau of Iran. However, such prosperous urban culture suddenly declined around 3200-2900BC and left a big cultural gap during the Third Millennium BC. Almost at the same time, the society of Northern Iran and Southern Caspian Sea Shoreline suddenly prospered, whose objects were very similar to Central Plateau of Iran. After entering the Second Millennium BC, people reoccupied Central Plateau again, and their material cultural had many similarities with North-Eastern Iran and Oxus Civilization. During this period, transcontinental interactions between Central Plateau of Iran and central Asia, Western China became very clear. Additionally, such cultural or demographic migration phenomenon could be closely related with the latest studies on

domestication and diffusion of indigenous cattle and horses. At the end of speech, Professor Nashli highlighted again the significance of cultural-history archaeology in revealing cultural interaction and population migration, which also need be supported by targeted scientific researches.

Professor Li Wenyong, deputy director of the Xinjiang Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, was the last scholar to present her speech on the “Communication and interaction on Dyeing and Weaving Costume Culture from 8th to 3rd Century BC on Xinjiang Section of the Silk Road”. Professor Li discussed the costume culture through different aspects such as weaving and dyeing technology. Based on archaeological findings, she summarized the overall and periodical developmental characteristics of costume culture in Xinjiang, especially regarding the inheritance, change and regional differences. The earliest archaeological evidence of costume culture in Xinjiang dates back to the Bronze Age. Not later than the Late Bronze Age, both the internal and external interactions of costume culture in Xinjiang became very frequent. Due to geographical differences, the Hami Basin was more influenced by Eastern culture, while the cultural factors of the Turpan Basin showed more diverse characteristics. Entering Early Iron Age from 8th to 3rd Century BC, the costume culture in the southern margin of the Tarim Basin continued to develop, including the inheritance and innovation. However, the costume culture in the Turpan Basin has regressed, which were largely related to the rise of nomadic economy in this area. During this period, the local costume culture of Xinjiang and the outside culture both spread out widely, making it one of the most important times in the formation of the ancient Silk Road in Xinjiang Section.